> *With Talend, marketing, financial, and student information is there, 2 to 3 times faster than before. The impact on our business is significant.*
>
> **Roxanne Reynolds-Lair,** CIO, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising

Designing the future of the institute with data at their fingertips

Industry
• Education

Information
• HQ: USA
• 501-1000 employees

Use case
• Operational reporting

Challenge
• Desperately needing information at our fingertips

Talend product used
• Talend Data Integration

Partner
• Key Information Systems
• Systech Solutions

Results
• **2-3x** faster processing with Talend ETL compared to previous tool

• Intuitive Talend GUI facilitates BI app development

• Faster access to accurate, timely reports Talend ETL helps make it possible for decision-makers

The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM) is dedicated to educating students for the fashion, graphics, interior design, and entertainment industries. Since FIDM's inception in downtown Los Angeles in 1969, the college has grown to four dynamic campuses with a co-ed student body of 6,000 full-time students from 30 countries and more than 30,000 graduates. With branch campuses in San Francisco, San Diego and Orange County, FIDM is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). The college's Resource and Research Center is the largest specialized fashion library in the Western United States, offering students access to print, online and electronic resources, as well as visual and creative materials.

Desperately needing information at our fingertips

When FIDM needed to expand its BI reporting functionality, they took a hard look at the ETL solution that they had been using since 2002. The tool had proved unreliable. The vendor's overseas location - with very different hours - made support problematic. It was difficult to add new data and also extremely slow. "We'd start processing at 2:00 a.m. and hope to be finished by 8:00," said Roxanne Reynolds-Lair, FIDM's CIO. "We were exploring other options with our current BI vendor, but they were going in another direction. When Key Information Systems approached us, we were intrigued." A cutting edge user of System i, with a longstanding relationship with Key, FIDM decided to build their new data mart on the Smart i, which uses Talend as the built-in ETL tool.

Why Talend?

FIDM is the first adopter of Smart i, a Business Intelligence appliance based on IBM's System i (AS/400) platform. The Smart i solution bundles IBM's DB2 Web Query and Talend Data Integration on an IBM Power Systems server, along with installation services from Key Information Systems and Systech Solutions.

"Our world today is very dynamic and we have to be able to respond to that," said Roxanne Reynolds-Lair. "Companies desperately need information at their fingertips in order to make strategic decisions. In many cases the BI solution is disconnected and may not be reliable because of all the different parts. We needed one integrated solution that would provide accurate, reliable, easy-to-use ways of accessing information in a flexible, timely manner."

"The Smart i was an ideal solution for us," added Roxanne Reynolds-Lair. "In addition to running on System i, it leveraged the skill set that we had in-house. We were very comfortable with the platform, and having access to the Java code means that we can customize the data types any way we want. Also, the solution takes advantage of DB2 Web Query which has huge potential, especially for the reporting functionality we need."

"We were the first customer to take advantage of Smart i," added Roxanne Reynolds-Lair. "Our team was instrumental in customizing the solution. We were determined to create a solution that would work for the System i community at large. There were some challenges, but the team was so committed and believed so strongly in the project that it was a pleasure to work through the difficulties to the end result - a really great solution!"

FIDM is pulling data from two primary sources - the DB2 transactional data on a large IBM i system, holding a lot of different types of data - (marketing, financial, student information, etc.), and the historical data from an SQL Server database. The primary data is in multiple DB2 files with different formats and has to be pulled into the new Smart i data mart.

Talend's transformation components - such as mapping, normalizing, sorting and aggregating -

cleanse, transform and load data into the new data mart. FIDM relied on Talend components to extract and load data, and used Talend components and features to integrate all Talend jobs and control the overall process flow. ETL load status alerts can be sent to the support team.

2 to 3 times faster to get the data

One key advantage for FIDM was Talend's graphical user interface (GUI). "It's a lot easier for our BI team to work with than our original tool," explained Roxanne Reynolds-Lair. "The interface has very intuitive mapping- you can move from top to bottom, left to right, and you can see the arrows - so it's easier for one person to develop something and have a second person come in and understand and work on it concurrently. And, because it runs natively on System i we can interface with our transactional batch jobs. On top of that, the online support, the community and the Talend team have been outstanding-much better than what we had in the past."

"The solution has created a much higher level of satisfaction for FIDM executives," said Roxanne Reynolds-Lair. "Basically we can access reports much faster and without any manual interface. Our CFO needs accurate, timely reports to make decisions about the business; when transitions failed - as often happened with our previous ETL tool - she was left with day-old data and manual calculations. The impact on business is significant when information isn't there. Today our database isn't any larger but the ETL processing is 2 to 3 times faster than before. It's a huge benefit for us going forward."